



ASLEF

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A moving farewell from Arkwright Road

AS I write this my desk in Arkwright Road resembles an island in a sea of blue packing cases. 90 years worth of paperwork, files, books and union memorabilia has been sorted, evaluated and packed in readiness for our move to new headquarters.

Everything from the crockery to model locos has been wrapped in bubblewrap and safely stowed away. This afternoon I will be rolling up my sleeves and helping to clear out the garden shed.

Many of you will have visited us here in 'the big house'. We look forward to welcoming you to our new home in the future.

Since ASLEF moved to London in 1921 we have won many notable victories for our members and this important work continues apace.

As a long time campaigner for improved safety at level crossings ASLEF is pleased to report that Network Rail has finally announced plans to fit 50 level crossing Obstacle Detectors before 2014 and a further 300 in the period from 2014-2019. This simple technology, which we have been demanding for years, is long overdue. It just makes you wonder why it has taken NR so long.

For instance an OD would have prevented the terrible tragedy which occurred in Ufton Nervet, Berkshire, in 2004, after a car was deliberately parked on the line, resulting in the deaths of seven people, including the driver. I have previously stated my belief that there is 'no such thing as an accident' on a level crossing, and that these sort of incidents can all be avoided. From our new headquarters you can be sure ASLEF will continue to fight until tragedies at level crossings become a thing of the past.

Keith Norman
General Secretary



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**More than
just a union**

ASLEF supports 'Off The Rails' campaign

On June 28th ASLEF members distributed leaflets detailing the concerns surrounding the McNulty report, which recommends allowing maintenance and signalling to be taken away from not-for-profit Network Rail and handed over to private companies.

Union activists took the campaign, titled 'Off The Rails', to Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge, Southend, Shoeburyness, Fenchurch Street and Liverpool Street. Off The Rails says 'We're really passionate about the railway and we desperately don't want to see the maintenance fall back into the hands of profit driven companies.'



Union activists distributed 'Off The Rails' leaflets to commuters



Railway veteran honoured for emergency

ASLEF member Willie Dickson has been honoured by an entire town for his "outstanding act of courage and bravery" in securing the safety of 60 passengers following the Falls of Cruachan derailment last year.

Willie, from Grangemouth and a railwayman for 30 years, was at the controls on June 6, 2010 when he unexpectedly came upon "two huge rocks" on the Glasgow-Oban line.

The 60-year-old applied the emergency brakes, remained at the controls until the train came to a rest – and helped safely evacuate the train while perched on a 50-foot high embankment above the A85.

His actions – key to avoiding a more serious incident following the landslide – led to a presentation by the people of Oban on the first anniversary of the incident.

He was treated to a slap-up meal and received a Quaich, which referred to the Falls

of Cruachan railway rescue and was engraved with the words: "Presented to William Dickson in appreciation and recognition of the outstanding act of courage and bravery."

Willie's on board colleagues Angus MacColl, from Oban, and hospitality host Drew Hinde, of Glasgow, were also honoured.

The presentation was led by Argyll and Bute Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, with the support of Oban's Common Good Fund.

He said: "The Oban community thought it fitting that the traincrew's actions should be recognised."

Willie Dickson said he was proud to receive the award and also paid tribute to colleagues. "They were magnificent," he said. "It was a real team effort, and they did a brilliant job in difficult circumstances."

"My thanks also go to all the passengers who helped out as well, ensuring that everyone disembarked safely. Everyone looked out for each other."

Steve Montgomery, ScotRail's managing director, said the actions of Willie and his co-workers were a credit to the company: "They did what they needed to do to keep the incident under control. It is what all of our staff are trained for, but their performance when faced with an actual emergency was exemplary."



Three Peakers raise thousands for street children

The Three Peaks Challenge by Rail has raised in excess of £180,000 for the Railway Children charity, which supports street children living in India, Africa and the UK. Many sleep on railway platforms. A total of 192 walkers, supported by over 30 volunteers, took part in the annual event – the only one of its kind to complete the whole trip by train.

The event saw the Three Peakers tackling the three highest mountains in the UK of Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis, after setting off from Euston in a specially chartered train.

The event, which took place over three days between Thursday 23rd and Saturday 25th June, included a night time climb up Snowdon, an early morning trek to the summit of Ben Nevis and very little sleep!

Railway Children Events Manager, Katie Mason said, "Well done to all the fantastic people who took part in this event. Despite the recession, everyone has worked so hard to ensure they raised their sponsorship money that is so vital to the charity. And our heartfelt thanks to the individuals and the companies who worked so hard to make sure we had another amazing event. Their effort and energy will make such a difference to the children we help."

A special 10th Anniversary Three Peak Challenge, takes place in June 2012.

Labour anger at snub to British manufacturer

Two members of Labour's shadow cabinet, John Denham, shadow Business Secretary and Maria Eagle, shadow Transport Secretary have urged David Cameron to reconsider a decision to award a contract worth £3.4b to German manufacturer Siemens to build and maintain new stock for Thameslink.

Siemens was awarded the contract for 1200 new carriages ahead of Britain's last surviving train manufacturer Bombardier.

Denham and Eagle condemned the decision as 'body blow' to British manufacturing adding that 'the only remaining company that designs,

builds, maintains and exports trains and parts in the UK is now in peril'.

Bombardier fears that it may now be forced to wind-down its British operation which currently employs 5000 people, and has already issued redundancy notices to hundreds of workers.



The National Organiser and members of the Executive Committee attended the launch of the Yes to High Speed Rail campaign in Westminster on June 22nd. The cross party campaign aims to make the case for the construction of a high speed rail network in the UK, highlighting both the increase in rail capacity that HS2 would bring as well as the economic benefits that the network would bring to regions across the UK.



Photos: Parsons Media

● TAXPAYERS HELP BRANSON POCKET £18M

Sir Richard Branson pocketed a dividend of £17.8 m from Virgin Rail last year, bringing his total dividend since railway privatisation to a £188.8m. In the same year Virgin Rail received £40m in subsidies from the taxpayer. Virgin Rail defended the dividend saying 'Virgin Rail took no dividend for the the first seven years (of the franchise) and now the turnover is one of the strongest in the country. Virgin Rail's contract to run the London to Glasgow line expires next year and the company is one of four bidding to win a renewed franchise which will run from January 2013. The West Coast route comes up for renewal as the government is considering franchises which could last as long as 15 years.

● NETWORK RAIL TO CLOSE 800 SIGNAL BOXES

Network Rail has confirmed plans to close up to 800 signal boxes. Over the next two decades Britain's network of boxes will be replaced by around 15 control centres, saving NR up to £300,000 per box, per year. A Network Rail spokesman confirmed to the Journal that the closures will be announced 'in the coming weeks'. When asked about the delay in announcing the cuts Network Rail said 'they wanted to speak to their employees first'. The plans will mean a major boost to whichever signalling contractor successfully tenders for the job of replacing the boxes but is likely to mean large scale job losses for those currently employed to operate the boxes.

Merseyrail reintegration plans deemed 'too risky'

In what is seen as an early rejection of one of the key recommendations of the McNulty report, plans to reintegrate Merseyrail by allowing the local authority to take over track maintenance and renewals from Network Rail have been abandoned as 'too risky'.

The news caused surprise across the industry, because Merseytravel had spent £1.5m making its case for reintegration.

Sir Roy McNulty had named the network as a likely candidate for early re-integration in his 'value for money' report, which was published in May, however Councillor Mark Dowd, who chairs the Labour-controlled Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority, revealed that the u-turn had been caused by fears that the authority could be taking on too much. It is already responsible for awarding the franchise to operate Merseyrail, which is currently held

by a consortium of Serco and Abellio, the national Dutch railway.

Councillors have now voted to end discussions.

Cllr Dowd denied that councillors had 'caved in' under union pressure. Instead he explained the U-turn by saying "I think there is too much uncertainty, we are better under government control." A council spokesman added that "Members don't want Merseyside to be emblematic of the issues surrounding the implementation of Sir Roy McNulty's report for reducing the cost of the railways."

The decision is welcomed by rail unions ASLEF and the RMT. ASLEF believes that the only way to safely achieve what is known as 'vertical integration' is to combine, or reintegrate, rail operators with infrastructure operators into a single publicly accountable body'

ASLEF RMS meeting at head office

On the 9th of June the ASLEF RMS committee convened for its last meeting at Arkwright Road. We had a constructive meeting which covered many subjects. National Officer Simon Weller and EC Member Dave Calfe reported on ASLEF and the EC. We are pleased to report the RMS is over 2000 strong, we were delighted to welcome the President of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Frank Cooper who gave an introduction to FERPA.

FERPA, the European Federation of Retired and Older People was founded in 1993, and is committed to a democratic society based on solidarity between generations. Its Constitution espouses the values and aims enshrined in the Constitution of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and campaigns for retired and older people to play an active part in shaping policy at every level. FERPA is committed to equality, an end to age and sex discrimination, including a



The RMS committee convened for the last time at Arkwright Road

guaranteed right for people with dependency issues to participate fully in society and for the improvement of health and social services, life-long learning and housing.

Frank thanked us for inviting him to talk, and ASLEF for the support it has shown to the NPC. Frank was particularly pleased to see a Southall branch banner hanging on the wall, as a relation of his was once a member.

Peter Smith, ASLEF RMS Reporter

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Made in Britain? Where next for Britain's train manufacturing industry?



**Maria Eagle MP,
Shadow Secretary
of State for
Transport**

THE decision to award the £1.4bn Thameslink train contract to the German company Siemens is a disaster for British skills and the rail manufacturing sector. It puts at risk over 3,000 British jobs at Bombardier, mainly in Derby with countless more in the supply chain. The even greater tragedy is that it puts at risk Britain's entire train-building industry. Unbelievably, the decision was announced on the very day that the Business Secretary was launching the government's 'Made by Britain' initiative.

It's vital that this decision is reviewed. There is nothing to prevent the government doing so. As Transport Secretary, Andrew Adonis commissioned an independent review of the entire Intercity Express project even after preferred bidder was named. Yet Philip Hammond's response has been to wash his hands of the whole process, even writing to the Prime Minister to complain about his own decision. The Department for Transport has clearly not secured the most economically advantageous outcome either for the local community or the country as a whole, despite it being perfectly permitted to do so.

The government has got this badly wrong and we will be keeping up the pressure, but there are lessons for Labour as well. It's true that under Labour Bombardier won successive orders, including for London Underground,

London Overground, London Midland, Chilterns and Stansted Express. However, it's clear that rail procurement was not working in the best interests of British manufacturing.

I believe we operated contracts under the European procurement directive in a different way to our European competitors. Why do France and Germany always manage to ensure their trains are built domestically? In April, Germany's national rail operator Deutsche Bahn placed a €5billion order for 200 high speed trains with Siemens. It would have been unthinkable for them not to have won that order.

We need to look at a longer-term approach to capital investment programmes, not the stop-start approach we have now that leaves manufacturers unable to plan ahead and hits

investment in skills. It's 800 days since the last new rolling stock order was placed. That 'feast-and-famine' approach to procurement has blighted the sector for years and must change. A significant amount of the cost to manufacturers is in setting up the production line and Network Rail believes a fifth of all procurement costs could be eliminated if there was continuity of orders.

And we need to reduce the number of train designs to enable longer, continuous orders to be placed and economies of scale to be achieved – as well as much needed interoperability. Network Rail has recommended reducing the 64 different rolling stock classes currently operating on the network to just three.

These changes would make a significant difference both to reducing cost, but also enable British based manufacturers to plan properly, skill their workforce adequately and secure the long-term work of the kind that is achieved in other sectors.

Rail in the UK is thriving. It is set to have some of its best years ahead. It would be a tragedy if UK manufacturing workforce was not able to benefit from this exciting future, with high-end skills and secure jobs within a genuine rail manufacturing sector that builds, as well as maintains, Britain's trains.



3,000 jobs at risk at train manufacturer Bombardier

Union meets with Transport Secretary



The union met Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond once again last month and raised the award of the Thameslink rolling stock contract to German firm Siemens but the Minister was adamant that there would be no reversal of the decision. National Organiser Simon Weller questioned the McNulty report's figures on train driver productivity and Hammond undertook to look into the points made.

Elsewhere the ASLEF Parliamentary Group

convened before the summer recess and in addition to Bombardier/Thameslink and the McNulty report General Secretary Keith Norman raised the renewed threat of Longer and Heavier Vehicles (LHVs) as well as the Pension Protection Fund obligations of railway pensions schemes. Parliamentary Group Chairman Kelvin Hopkins undertook to raise a number of the issues at a senior ministerial level and also paid tribute to Keith's leadership of ASLEF over the last six years.

Dyslexic – not that you would know it

MICHAEL BURDESS is an ASLEF Union Learning Rep, ASLEF Branch Secretary for (062) Dover Branch, Project Coordinator for Folkestone & District Family History Society, a General Register Office Working Party Rep and has been a train driver for nearly 28 years. Michael is also dyslexic – not that you would know it ...

In fact it was not something that Michael was aware of until just over a year ago. Michael was elected to the position of ASLEF Union Learning Rep (ULR) in January 2010 and attended his ULR Stage One training course a few months later. As part of this training Michael did the basic skills assessments in Maths and English. Michael scored a 2 for Maths and working towards level 3 for English and was fairly satisfied until it was explained that 1 was a high score and 3 was low. Michael is the first to admit that English is not his strong point but the result of this assessment unsettled him and set him thinking.

Reflecting on his time at school Michael says he tolerated it. "I didn't walk out with a great deal of qualifications" says Michael "I walked out with Mathematics, Technical Drawing, Metalwork – that side of things. My English skills were probably middle of the road if that – I never took to it and found it hard, whereas Mathematics I could sit down and go through it quite easily. Technical Drawing I could sit down and do the drawings, metalwork, science subjects – I could pick up the subject but what I always found was the problem was the written side of it. I never stayed for any further education at all. It just didn't suit me."

Following school Michael served in the Royal Engineers until forced out after two years due to a knee injury at which point he decided to join the rail industry. Michael encountered no difficulties learning to be a

train driver.

"Up until about 8 or 9 years ago" Michael explains "much of the training was delivered through verbal communication and observation. It was about proving to an examiner that I knew what I was talking about and dealing with. My driving exam lasted three-days – one day on rules and regulations, another day on technical knowledge and a third day on driving. As long as you could show competencies in all three areas to a level you passed. There wasn't a written section to it and I've never had to sit a written assessment at work." More recently computer based

“ MICHAEL ENCOUNTERED NO DIFFICULTIES LEARNING TO BE A TRAIN DRIVER ”

assessments have been introduced by the rail industry but this does not phase Michael – computers happen to be one of his strengths.

Following Michael's ULR Stage One training he was shown by the course tutor that his scores could indicate that an individual has a learning need such as dyslexia. Michael discussed this with his mother who was not surprised – she reminded Michael that he had been tested for learning difficulties in his



school years and that other members of his family also had dyslexia although it had seldom been referred to directly by name. Although the word Dyslexia has been around for over a hundred years it was not given official recognition by the Department of Education until 1994.

Michael's next step was to be assessed by an Educational Psychologist specialising in Dyslexia. "It was a big step" says Michael "and not one I would recommend to people with initial concerns. There are a number of free assessments that you can do through local colleges but I was at a stage where I wanted clarity so I paid the £400 for the assessment". The assessment confirmed that Michael was dyslexic – it identified that he has a poor short term memory and difficulty with the ordering of numbers and letters. The psychologist also identified numerous coping strategies that Michael employs to overcome the challenges his dyslexia presents. "I'd never thought about it in terms of coping strategies" says Michael "I just do what I do"

Some of Michael's strategies include:

- Reading key information 5 or 6 times to absorb it
- Keeping key numbers and codes written down for ease of reference
- Maintaining an up-to-date Diary of forthcoming meetings
- Using a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)

These are tools which many people without dyslexia employ – the difference is that Michael has grown to depend upon them. "It sounds weird" says Michael "but the best way of putting it is I have a coping strategy for doing everything. I will finish today, go home, I will put my watch in a certain place, my wallet in a certain place, keys will be in a certain place, it's a set routine and if I don't follow it when I leave the house I will forget things".

Having been diagnosed with dyslexia, Michael informed his line manager at Southeastern Trains. He was referred to his Operations Manager who said that as long Michael could pass a Risk Assessment it would



FAMOUS DYSLEXICS: Whoopi Goldberg, Pablo Picasso and Quentin Tarantino

not be an issue.

Dyslexia is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act and as such employers are legally obliged not to discriminate against and to make reasonable adjustments for dyslexic individuals. Michael recognises the important protection that the DDA affords him, but remains philosophical – “It’s not a disability to me” he says “it’s something I live with.” On the subject of reasonable adjustments Michael makes no demands. He is satisfied that his employer grants him a degree of flexibility in terms of reporting and communication but he doesn’t consider it “reasonable” to expect his manager to design the system to Michael’s specific needs nor does he consider that this would be justifiable in terms of costs and business need. That point is debatable, especially from a trade union perspective but the fact remains that in the workplace, for the time being at least, Michael is satisfied with the status quo.

Michael is less accommodating with people’s attitudes that he considers a major barrier. Michael doesn’t discriminate – officials, employers, grass-roots trade unionists – “It needs to change” he says “but it needs to change not just with dyslexia but

“ IT IS ACCEPTED THAT APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 10 PEOPLE SUFFER FROM SOME FORM OF DYSPLEXIA ”

with all disabilities. The whole disabilities awareness training needs to be revamped and ideally delivered by people with disabilities who can say “look this is it – I’m no different to you. It’s not acceptable for people with learning difficulties to be written off as stupid. I’ve been in situations where other reps have joked about people with dyslexia. It doesn’t bother me – I have broad shoulders but I’m quick to explain to them the impact that kind of attitude can have in the workplace – especially among people we’re trying to help through union learning”.

Statistics vary but it is generally accepted that approximately 1 in 10 people suffer from some form of dyslexia. That figure may in fact be higher if you take into account people like Michael whose dyslexia, for many years, went undiagnosed. Michael’s involvement with ASLEF’s union learning project has helped him identify his dyslexia and importantly to recognise that it need not be a career or social barrier. Michael’s experiences would also suggest that a lot of work needs to be done to change attitudes at all levels to enable those with dyslexia to receive the support they need, to enrich and improve their lives and to empower them to make a valuable contribution to society.

200 take part in Passport to Learning Week

This year’s Passport to Learning Adult Learners Week saw nearly 200 participants join events planned around the Southern Network. There were some great activities taking place to encourage people in to learning and to take part in the skills assessments available.

The week was a huge success with many people taking part or signing up for a variety of courses such as English, Maths, IT and the new Art and Digital Photography classes.

SIMULATORS

The Sim Experience day was another huge success, and saw many people have a go at the new Train Driver simulators. Barry Thomas (Southern Trainer) kindly offered to operate the Train Driver simulators at Selhurst Training Centre. Everyone who attended really enjoyed the experience and also had the chance to find out more about becoming a Train Driver. There was lots of help and advice given to all those interested in taking up a career as a driver and lots of interest was also shown in the courses running through P2L.

ART EXHIBITION

An Art exhibition was held during the week at our

Croydon and Brighton Learning Centres.

Learners who attended the recent Art course in Brighton were invited to submit a piece of work to be displayed at LAW.

Over 60 people came along to view the pieces of work and to vote for their favourite.

Seamus McQuaid of Knollys House, had the winning number of votes for his caricature of ‘Richard Nixon’ and was congratulated by Bob Mayne, Finance Director who came along to view all the Art on display and help with the final count.

Well Done Seamus!

ORGANISERS

ASLEF ULRs who took part and helped during the week were, Denise Bloom – Horsham Depot, Gavin Martin – Redhill Depot and Malcolm Hough – Victoria Depot.



The Salsa taster sessions were well received. Not only fun but healthy too.

Denise Bloom organised a joint event with the RMT and ran an Arts and Crafts day at Crawley Learning Centre on the Monday.

Gavin Martin helped with the Learning Bonanza Day at Brighton on the Thursday.

Malcolm Hough joined the RMT in a joint event at London Victoria.



Train Driver simulators proved very popular



Seamus McQuaid and his caricature of Richard Nixon

Adult Learners Week in Wales

Two events were held for the ASLEF Education Welsh Project to promote Lifelong Learning as part of Adult Learners Week in May 2011 – one at Swansea and one at Carmarthen. A lot of interest was shown by potential new learners.

Swansea has a small Learning Centre which has recently been refurbished, but not yet fitted with computers. However the potential to develop this resource was clearly identified during the event.

In Carmarthen, 20 Arriva Trains Wales staff – platform staff, train crew and drivers spoke to the ASLEF project worker. Surveys indicated a significant amount of interest from learners in acquiring or improving IT skills. There was also a lot of interest in language courses including Welsh, Spanish and Indian as well as recreational and career diversifying courses including plastering, bricklaying and electronics.

The ASLEF ULR for Arriva, Gary Hughes is following up specific expressions of interest and plans are in motion to hold a Learning Enrolment Day in South Wales in the very near future.

Join the RMS's new and exciting fundraising scheme

The 500 Club

Pay a £4 stake each month and be entered into a monthly draw to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize!

Of the total monies collected 50% will help fund RMS activities and half will go back to club members as prizes.



The more members in the club,
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The 500 Club is open to individuals, branches and district councils.

If you would like to take part please contact Lee James at Head Office at ljames@aslef.org.uk or on 020 7317 8600 by 6th June 2011.

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What **HS2** will mean for the West Midlands **High Speed Rail**

This month has seen renewed controversy surrounding the development of High Speed rail links, not just in the UK but in continental Europe, where as many as 60 police and protestors were hurt in recent clashes along the proposed France – Italy route, which cuts through the picturesque Val di Susa in the Italian Alps. Back home a 'YouGov/TaxPayers' Alliance poll (of fewer than 3,000 people) reported that 48% of those surveyed support cancelling plans to fund a new high speed rail line between London and Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. The cost – of over £30 billion - of HS2 is a serious concern to the public, according to the poll, with only 34% of people supporting the high speed link. As in Europe, residents who live along the proposed route fear that, despite safeguards built into the project, an area of outstanding natural beauty is going to be spoilt.

Here **Richard Lakin points out the positive side of HS2, a project which has the full support of this union ...**

THE first phase of HS2 would link London and Birmingham, the second phase of development would see the lines extended via a 'Y'-shaped network to Manchester and Leeds.

The line would reach Birmingham first, so what would the benefits be for the UK's second city and the wider West Midlands region?

Jobs and investment are the obvious answers, but HS2 would

also release capacity on existing lines meaning many more local and regional rail services could run across the West Midlands.

Stations including Coventry, Walsall and Wolverhampton would get new services, allowing more people to make their journeys by rail. More capacity would also be available for freight, relieving road congestion.

The UK's railways are a tremendous success, supporting 1.25bn journeys per year and ever

growing levels of rail freight. The success of the railways connects people to jobs and businesses to markets in a manner that's good for the environment and reduces road congestion. However, the railways are full and the challenge we face is how to provide additional capacity to meet demand. Forecasts predict growth of 35% on the West Coast Main Line between Birmingham and London by 2020. Despite the recession the number of passengers continues to grow. Rail journeys within the West Midlands have increased by nearly 40% in the last five years. Action has to be taken to meet this rising demand.

The economic rewards HS2 will bring are tremendous and working families will benefit. An independent survey by KPMG concludes that economic output in the West Midlands will increase by around £1.5bn a year and 22,000 jobs will be created.

Under proposals drawn up at Centro HS2 will allow for the restructuring of regional rail bringing more services to towns and cities across the West Midlands. Coventry, for example, would see increased services to Birmingham and Oxford, as well as new services to Liverpool and Scotland. Wolverhampton would benefit from additional services to London, Birmingham International and Milton Keynes, while Walsall would get new

services to London, Liverpool, Northampton, Milton Keynes, and Coventry.

It is these local and regional rail enhancements that will unlock so much of the region's potential and allow for growth. Bringing HS2 to Birmingham alone would generate a £600m increase in economic output and around 10,000 jobs. But, combined with the improvement in regional rail services, High Speed Rail's impact on the regional economy is more than doubled to £1.5bn per year and 22,000 jobs.

These developments will, of course, bring many more jobs in rail. HS2 would provide employment for 400 train crew and many hundreds more staff at depots and stations between Birmingham and London. A new depot would be built at Washwood Heath in Birmingham, providing hundreds of jobs. And there would be many new jobs on the enhanced regional and local services.

As countries across Europe are demonstrating, High Speed Rail will help us to build and provide for future generations.

HS2 is an opportunity to create jobs, bring investment and build transport infrastructure for future generations. It is an opportunity to provide better and faster links for the West Midlands, not just to London but to the north of England and Scotland as well as Europe. A new city centre station will be built next to the Bullring and Moor Street station, providing great access in the heart of Birmingham, while the proposed Birmingham Interchange HS2 station would bring huge advantages in terms of connectivity to the wider West Midlands, with links to the motorway network, Birmingham International station, Birmingham Airport and the NEC.

Birmingham city centre would be under 50 minutes from London and Manchester, around an hour from Leeds and less than three hours from Paris.

The West Midlands cannot afford to miss this once-in-a-generation chance to bring High Speed Rail to the region.

● **Richard Lakin is from Go-HS2 campaign group. To register your support for HS2 visit <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/>**

Securing our pensions for the future



The coming months will see a great deal of discussion in respect of pension provision in the railway industry, writes Dave Tyson ...

IN THE coming month's employers and employee representatives will be engaging in discussions on the results of the 2010 valuation of the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS). Simply; the schemes assets (Shares, bonds, property etc) are measured against its liabilities (pensions in payment now and the future), if the assets are higher than the liabilities the scheme is in surplus and vice versa. For most sections of the RPS the results will once again show a deficit and it will fall to the employers and employees to discuss a recovery plan so that the liabilities of the scheme are fully funded now and for years to come.

Ultimately this will mean an increase in contributions for both parties as the contributions are based on a 60/40 split. The Scheme Actuary along with RPMI will give guidance and advice on how to draw up such plans which, once due consultation has taken place will be put before the Trustees for approval. The plans may include extended

recovery periods (10 years plus) or changes to benefits such as early retirement factors or retirement ages, we have all seen what has been proposed for workers in both the private and public sectors!

The valuation also has coincided with the publication of the McNulty report which in itself says very little about pensions. However McNulty did commission Peter Thompson, FIA to look into the RPS. Mr. Thompson was one member of the Railways Pension Commission whose report was published on the back of the 2007 valuation, the recommendations of which were largely ignored. The latest report reiterates the message of 2007 and can be found on the DfT website. It suggests that the RPS is not sustainable in the long term and suggests changes to benefits, the abolition of BRASS and the creation of a Career Average Pension Provision (CARE). None of these proposals have been adopted. Mr Thompson does suggest that any proposed changes should be reached through negotiation with the Trade Unions.

The root of the problem is that employers and government wish to drive down costs and Final Salary Pensions which are seen as a large cost in a company balance sheet. While there may be suggestions to reduce costs by chipping away at benefits or providing an alternative to the Final Salary pension there is an alternative that should be looked at. This comes in the form of the Pension Protection

Fund (PPF). All Final Salary pension schemes have to pay a levy to the PPF to comply with the 2004 Pensions Act. The PPF exists to protect pensions when a company has gone bust and there is no contribution stream; Jarvis for example. This was a very proactive step in my view, however I fail to understand why TOC's have to pay such a levy when it is clear a franchise will be run by government in the event of an absent franchisee. E.G East Coast. Why have car insurance if you do not own a car?

To date, the TOCs sections of the RPS have paid in excess of £60 million into the PPF, which on a 60/40 split means that on average each member pays £200 per year into the PPF, while standing to gain little or no benefit. This has been a constant source of frustration to the TOCs and Trustees alike yet so far attempts to achieve any exemption or reduction in the levy payable have been unsuccessful. I have written to the General Secretary on this matter.

The coming months will see a great deal of discussion in respect of pension provision in the railway industry, and it is down to the Trustees to see that due consultation has taken place and that sensible and affordable proposals are put forward to secure pensions for the future.

Finally, if members wish to hear more about pensions issues I am always available to attend Branch meetings to talk and answer any questions they may have.

Mind the gap in pension reforms

UP TO half a million women, aged in their fifties stand to lose out under government plans to speed-up increases to the state pension age. 500,000 women in their mid fifties face having to work up to two years longer before they will be entitled to claim their state pensions.

In total 2.6 million women will have to wait longer than expected before they can draw their pension. Campaign

groups and MPs have challenged the plans, claiming that they place an unfair burden on women, many of whom have little time to prepare for the changes that are on the horizon.

Rachel Reeves, Labour's Shadow Pension's minister denounced the changes, saying that 'it is simply wrong to punish women by moving the goalposts at this late stage. I've always agreed that the state

pension age needs to rise as people grow older' she added, 'but these proposals unfairly hit women'.

Approximately 35,000 women born between March 6th 1954, and April 5th 1954 will be particularly badly hit. They will be required to work a full two years longer and will lose £10,624 in pension, based at current levels.

The coalition government argues that speeding up the

reforms will save the taxpayer £30b by 2025, but the delay has been condemned by organizations including SAGA and Age UK.

Worst hit will be the poorest, as payments of the means tested Pension Credit, or minimum Income Guarantee will also be delayed, causing additional hardship. Currently 1.6m pensioners fail to claim top-ups to which they are entitled.

Government plans for longer lorries would kill consumer rail freight



Bigger HGVs will lead to bigger problems on our roads explains

Philippa Edmunds ...

PLEASE lobby your MP to oppose the Government's proposal for 7ft (2.05 metres) longer HGVs, which has not only misled the public on the road safety threat of longer lorries but distorted the road congestion and pollution impacts.

Freight on Rail, supported by the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Maria Eagle, -the Campaign for Better Transport, CTC - the national cyclists' organisation, Friends of the Earth, Living Streets, RoadPeace and Sustrans, warns that Government plans to allow longer lorries on UK roads could lead to between 4-8% more collisions and an extra 6 more road deaths per year and decimate consumer rail freight growth.

The Government's central case is built on the prediction that road operators will increase their share of goods traffic as a result of introducing longer lorries, despite its stated commitment to increase consumer rail freight which is backed by the public and the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Maria Eagle who says that; 'the Government needed a co-ordinated strategy for shifting more freight onto the railways'. Consumer rail freight has increased market share for the 8th consecutive year and now outstrips coal traffic. The Government's own research shows that the introduction of these longer lorries would reduce domestic rail freight growth by



Government plans to allow longer lorries on UK roads could decimate consumer rail freight growth

two thirds by 2025, and fails to properly address the viability of remaining rail traffic. Worse, the analysis presents this reduction as a benefit to the logistics sector, with some 84% of the quoted cost savings associated with longer lorries coming from reduced rail costs.

The Government's justification is based on the assumption that longer lorries will result in fewer road trips, but previous increases in length and/or weight have simply resulted in the same amount of lorries on the roads but with lower loads. Government figures show that more than one in four lorries are driving around empty and almost half of lorries are neither constrained by weight or volume of cargo, i.e partially loaded, so if they cannot fill existing sized lorries, why will they be able to fill bigger ones?

HGVs are already almost four times (384%)

more likely to be involved in fatal crashes on minor roads than cars. The Government research however, concluded that longer lorries would lead to a zero increase in fatalities by assuming that 85% of collisions involving HGVs are unaffected by length. These conclusions are not credible as collisions are usually caused by a combination of factors. How can a 7 ft longer lorry trailer, which occupies 17% more road space, acknowledged by the Government to have greater tail swings and more susceptibility to cross winds, not lead to an increase in road crashes?

● For more details go to www.freightonrail.org.uk or Campaign for Better Transport web action http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/take_action/longer-lorries-mps

Holy semaphores! It's a date at the Palace for the 'boy wonder'

ASLEF was delighted to hear that Chiltern Railways driver and Safety Officer Dave Newell had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Cary Gee went to meet him and began by asking how he felt when he received the news ...

Shocked surprised and absolutely delighted. It's fantastic. The official citation for his MBE reads 'for services to the rail industry' and in particular 'child safety'. Perhaps the thing that gives Dave most pleasure is that he was nominated for the award by his fellow drivers. Reluctant to name names Dave eventually concedes that Marylebone driver Phil Smith started the ball rolling by writing the first letter. The campaign to recognise almost four decades of service

gathered momentum when other drivers, train crew supervisors, schools and even the Oxfordshire fire service came aboard.

Dave's only regret is that he is unable to share his honour with retired driver Mike Benson. Benson died last year, but well into his official retirement continued to act as a safety officer, visiting schools alongside Dave to warn children about the potential dangers of playing on the railway. 'We we're known in

I was driving the 18.11 from Romford. I saw these children. I blew the whistle and they ran right in front of me. I was only doing thirty miles an hour and put the brake into emergency. The girl disappeared from view.' As passengers who had seen the little girl disappear in front of the train began to scream Dave spent the next few minutes convinced he had run her over. 'That she was dead'. Dave left the train and then, to his enormous relief saw the girl running away. Later he rang the parents of the children involved and was shocked to be told by one mum, 'I don't see what the problem is. I told my daughter it was safe to pick blackberries because it was only a little train!'

To this day Dave remains flabbergasted at this one mother's reaction. He finished his shift only after warning that if he ever saw the same kids on the line again he would refer the matter to the British Transport Police. Dave was lucky on this occasion. His safety partner less so. 'In a fifty year career Mick had 6 child fatalities, including twin girls'. This is Dave's motivation for the work he does. 'In all the time I've been doing this I've never claimed a penny in expenses' he states. 'I'm paid as a driver, and am released from driving duties when I need to make a school visit'. His classroom duties mean that Dave is frequently recognised in his cab. 'I've had kids drag their parents the length of the train to come and say hello to me in my cab' he says with pride. 'Which one are you?' they want to know. 'Batman or Robin!'

By the age of 4 Dave had overcome his fear

“ TO DAVE'S ENORMOUS RELIEF HE SAW THE GIRL RUNNING AWAY FROM THE TRACK ”

three counties as Batman and Robin!' I think I already know the answer to my next question but ask anyway.

'Batman was Mick. I was Robin. Dave answers. 'We worked so well together. I teamed up with Mick when I first came to Chiltern in '95. Together we've taught thousands of children the safety message over the years'. And the message is; 'Think before you act'. The valuable work that Batman and Robin, and countless others like them across the network do, is rooted in a near tragedy, that proves 'you can't always rely on the grown-ups'.

'I very nearly killed three kids right where I live in Emerson Park, Essex. Two boys and a girl were picking blackberries near a foot crossing.



Safety is an ongoing business so there is still a lot of work left to do says Dave

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk

of the steam whistle and knew he wanted to drive a train and his ambitions never wavered. His first job on the railways was as a Traction Trainee at the age of 21. After two weeks of cleaning engines he trained as a second man. Although he is from a railway family he became the 'only driver the Newell's have ever produced' when he was passed for driving in '75. He joined ASLEF the same day he joined the railways. 'I remember it well. Jim, from Liverpool handed me a form and said 'sign here!' I've been a proud member of the union ever since. I suspect he is also the only MBE the family has produced. He has to think about this for a minute or two before conceding that 'yes, to his knowledge' he is probably the first! One of his sons has already joined DLR as a

“ **HIS CLASSROOM DUTIES MEAN THAT DAVE IS FREQUENTLY RECOGNISED IN HIS CAB** ”

controller, the other studies atomic physics in Amsterdam, and he has two small grand daughters. One has already shown more than a passing interest in trains. The other prefers the ferry, or the bus. Dave himself has never been happier since he joined Chiltern in '94. 'If you like to chat (and believe me, Dave certainly does) then Marylebone is the perfect station.' Dave goes into 'classroom mode' and delivers a faultless routine, honed over many years. It's easy to see why he has impressed so many children, parents and colleagues. Despite this Dave's mates are not above taking the mick. 'I've had a few people bowing to me' he laughs. 'One driver fell to his knees when he saw me at the information kiosk!' However his immense pride at receiving his honour is coupled to a touching humility.

Although he doesn't yet have a date to go to the Palace, 'hopefully I'll get my award from



Dave is a safety officer, visiting schools to warn children about the potential dangers of playing on the railway

the Queen', he 'would like to accept this award in Mick's memory'. He is grateful to his employers for retaining Mick's services long after he finished driving duties, and credits the decision for keeping his friend alive. 'We got an extra 9 years of the Mick'. Together they have

contributed much to an improved safety record on Chiltern Railways. Dave may have lost his Batman but has no intention of slowing down just yet. 'Safety is an ongoing process. There is still a lot of work left to do'. Not to mention a new suit to buy.

A HUNDRED YEARS OF UNION

The ASLEF Locomotive Journal of 1911 had a report from 'Nota Bene' on the dangers from a run on the banks and the fatal consequences of not wearing a hat in the sun ...

THE BIRKBECK BANK SCARE

"Arising out of the failure of the Birkbeck, a question was asked by Mr Gibson Bowles as to what would happen in the event of a run on the Post Office Savings

Bank, which, according to him, had a deficiency of probably 20 millions sterling, It was to the effect that the Post Office could not become bankrupt, as the credit of the nation - the Consolidated Fund - was

behind it, and not a single penny entrusted to its keeping could ever be in danger of being lost".

THE "NO HAT" CRAZE

"The danger of discarding head-gear in hot weather, at any rate in the case of young people, was made evident by the death of a South Shields boy, who had been in the habit of going to and from school wearing

neither hat nor cap. While at school one day he complained of pains in his head, and he was thereupon sent home. He subsequently became delirious and eventually died from sunstroke. At the inquest, the coroner said that the practice of going about in hot weather without any head-covering was a very dangerous one, and that the fact that it was so could not be too widely known".

○ Extracts selected and edited by Dave Bennett

Brighton makes history at the Railway Club

ON Tuesday 17th May Brighton ASLEF Branch held its first Drivers reunion at the Brighton Railway Club.

This reunion was also open to any ASLEF members connected to other Depots that operated in Sussex in the Central Division of the Southern Region.

The idea behind the Reunion came from the Brighton branch website "Brighton Motive Power Depots" which aims to record the history of members since the Branch opened in 1891.

An enjoyable day took place with over 150 retired and active Drivers in attendance. Some had travelled from as far away as Edinburgh and Penzance! Many retired members renewed friendships with members they had not seen since retiring as long as 20 years ago.

Marz Colombini, EC Member District No 1 and National Organiser Simon Weller (Brighton Branch member) were also present.

Simon Weller presented 40 year membership badges to Retired Drivers Bob "Jetlag" Atwood and Maurice "Dougal"



Brighton members at the Railway Club with Marz Colombini Fourth from left and Simon Weller, right

Hunter and 50 year membership Medallions to retired Drivers Mick Hawkins, Bill "Spike" Jones, Bill Mackenzie, John "Chalky" White and Jack Sanders.

Both Mick Hawkins and Bill Mackenzie having served as L.D.C. representatives of ASLEF Brighton Branch over many years.

I would like to thank the Railway Club for providing the Buffet and for making the afternoon and evening pass all too quickly.

Ivan Wilson, ASLEF Brighton Branch Chairman



THE annual ASLEF Shrewsbury Branch retired members' get together took place last month - Drinks, handshakes and warm embraces preceded a sit down meal followed by a few words from various speakers before EC Member Dave Calfe presented a 50 year medallion to retired member Charlie Willis, and congratulating Charlie on this fine achievement which he said showed true commitment to the trade union. Charlie proudly accepted the award and spoke fondly of times gone past but poured scorn on the modern day use of consultants and people from outside the industry and questioned their ability to run a railway, noting that 'you may not have liked your bosses, but at least you knew they had done the job before you'. Remarks greeted by enthusiastic applause from the floor.
Alan Griffiths, Chairman, Shrewsbury Branch

Stratford bids farewell to brother John and Alan is honoured for long service

ON Saturday 4th June, we said farewell to Brother John Rowland, who has left the railway after 25 years of service and ASLEF membership. On 13th May, John retired following a long period of ill health. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him. We will of course keep in touch with John.

John had spent much of his career serving the membership as H&S Rep, at his previous depot, Gidea Park, and more recently at Liverpool Street. At the 'farewell do' John was presented with an ASLEF Certificate and a card signed by colleagues. On behalf of John, I would like to thank District Organiser Andy Morrison for all his hard work in ensuring the day was such a success.

On a separate occasion, Stratford Branch was also pleased to be able to present Brother Alan Williamson with a Long Service badge in recognition of 45 years ASLEF membership. Alan didn't want his photo taken, but we'll hopefully catch up with him when he gets his



John Rowland was presented with an ASLEF Certificate and a card signed by colleagues

50 years medallion!

Well done to both Alan and John. We wish John the very best wishes for the future!

John Thorpe, Branch Reporter, Stratford Branch

Upcoming events

○ BURY DEPOT REUNION

20 years after the Bury depot in Greater Manchester closed in Aug '91 staff, family and friends are all invited to a 'first reunion' which will take place at the Trackside, Bolton Street Station, Bury on August 20th 12.00 onwards. For information call Eddie on 0161 762 1019

○ GARSTON DEPOT REUNION

I would like to inform members that Garston Depot is having a reunion at the LMS club, Burnsall Street, Garston on 24th September this year. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased from either Allan Taylor at Warrington, Steve Maloney at Lime Street, Steve Foster at Kirkdale, Mick Maloney at Birkenhead, Steve Glover, Lime Street and Chris Todd, Lime Street.

For information call Chris Todd on 07927996529 or email todd390@hotmail.com

2012 marks the big 4-0 at Old Oak Common

A big thank you to all ex colleagues from Old Oak Common 81A, circa 1972, who attended our reunion at Reading General on June 11. The next get together will take place Saturday 15 October, 2011 from 12.00 onwards at the same location. (The pub outside the station). For those who began their railway careers in 1972, many aged just 16, next year will mark 40 years on the railway. We feel that a one-off event to celebrate this milestone should be arranged, and the West Somerset Railway (which

has a Hymek and a Western) was suggested as a possible destination for a weekend trip.

The above meeting has been scheduled to discuss ideas and a date when such a visit might take place. We'd also like you to send us any old photographs or memorabilia from this era to include in a new Old Oak Common Depot 81A website. For more information please email me at rdorkings@yahoo.com

Bob Dorkings, Barnham Branch Ex 81A

Stourbridge still going strong

On behalf of all the retired drivers at Stourbridge I would like to thank Mick Whelan for attending the ASLEF reunion held at the local miners club.

The depot at Stourbridge closed in 1986 but ASLEF and RMT have managed to keep this get together going for the last 25 years.

Over the last 10 years Mick has never let these stalwarts down and has attended every year even though the function has always been held over the Easter weekend.

Thanks again Mick and we look forward to seeing you in 2012!

Bob Hodson

Trainspotting Jan retires at Southport

Jan has retired due to ill health after 45 years on the railway. Jan will be missed by friends across the railway and especially staff at Southport. Jan was always willing to 'go the extra mile' and quick to help out a friend in need. Jan loved trains. One Saturday in the 1980s when Jan was supposed to be at work for 1700 he rang his supervisor at 1600 and said 'I'm stuck at Central and will be late'. The supervisor replied that Jan should 'get himself to



Jan was presented with a model diesel

Hall road and I will get your train taken there by the spare man'. Jan explained he was actually at Glasgow Central not Liverpool central. He

had been out train-spotting all night! Here's wishing Jan many happy years to devote to his hobby. All the best Jan, in your retirement.



Jan Quartermaine (with the hat on) after being presented with a model diesel, card and collection by all members of staff at Southport depot, and a book about trains from a trains manager

30 years at Leytonstone

The recent retirement of Ray Harwood was marked with the presentation of an engraved tankard on behalf of the Leytonstone branch by District Organiser Steve Grant.

Ray, who has been a member for 30 years, was always an active and vocal member of the branch and served as an industrial rep at Leytonstone Central Line LUL. Bob Tong, Secretary, Leytonstone branch

**Don't let it cost
you your job!**



A wonderful occasion for drivers and retired members at Derby

ONCE again it gives me great pleasure to report on another great day as Derby held its annual Reunion event for retired ASLEF drivers in Derby.

Since the wives of footplate crews decided to get together for a cup of tea and a chat with fellow wives more than 115 years ago the Derby reunion has morphed into a wonderful occasion for drivers and their families who meet up to reminisce about their railway lives telling hilarious tales that only loco men could have experienced.

Retired certificates were presented to Bro J Marsland and Peter Reilly. A fifty year medallion was also presented to Peter Reilly.

Unfortunately Bro Keith

Brocklehurst was unable to attend because of illness. I visited Keith at home and presented him with his medallion, he was surprised and extremely proud. It was great to see the smile on his face.

A wonderful buffet was provided and this was followed by a raffle.

A special mention to Sharon Lambert, Betty Topley, Nina and Adel Abbot who did the catering and organised the raffle and to Derby drivers John Green, Colin Barnes, Jim Abbott, retired. Last but not least all the Driver members of the ASLEF welfare at Derby, without whose support the reunion could not take place.

Eamonn Tague, Branch Secretary, Derby 059



Left to Right G Rigby, F Wingfield, E Cartwright ex EC member, E Brown, J Weston Derby's oldest member and J Dyer



Left to right James Lindsey Railway Chaplain John Marsland and Eamonn Tague Branch Secretary

Kings Cross say goodbye to some legends

The retirement function on the 13th of May this year.

As I am sure you will remember we started the function with the long service awards.

The Long Service Awards were first, a personalised 40 year badge to Ron Judd. Personalised 45 year badges to, Tony Atkin, Roy Green, George Savage and Keith Smith, Les Muir. Then 50 year medallions to, Jim Anderson and John Tutty.

There was some deep sadness at Kings Cross Branch earlier this year as we lost Retired Members Dave Foster and Phil Ford. Phil's 50 year medallion was received just before he died. Phil's 50 year medallion was given to his Wife Pam and Daughter Jill in a special presentation at this function.

OUR RETIRING MEMBERS

Alan Williams: Alan is the baby of the bunch as he started on the Railway in 1973 at King's Cross and surely is far too young to retire. Alan went to Stratford in 1977 for a Drivers position and then returned to King's Cross in 1979 where he stayed until his last working day on the 31st December 2010.

Keith Maeer: Keith started at Stratford Depot in 1968 and came to King's Cross in 1992. Keith is the third generation to start in the grade at Stratford. His Grandfather started there in 1911 and his Father started in 1946, in

all 99 years in the driving grade on the Railway (as Keith also retired on the 31st December 2010).

Ian Harvey: Ian started at Stratford on the 14th of October 1963 and passed out as Driver on the 11th September 1972 and then on the 10th June 1974 moved to Hertford East. Ian was made redundant in February 1991 when Hertford East closed and went to Chingford and then in February 1992 Ian came to King's Cross. Ian has twice worked a royal train, first with Her Majesty the Queen on the 8th

February 1968 from Kings Lynn to Liverpool Street and then with His Royal Highness King Frederick of Denmark on the 24th of April 1968 from Harwich to Liverpool Street.

Dave Webber: Dave is a true legend at King's Cross as he is the last of the legendary Top Shed Men. Dave is the last in our grade to have started at King's Cross Top Shed. Dave started as an Engine Cleaner and went through the ranks (Passed Cleaner, Fireman, Passed Fireman and Driver) and has always been at King's Cross



L-R Les Muir, Kings Cross Branch Secretary, Nigel Gibson, EC Member District 5, Retirees; Alan Williams, Keith Maeer, Ian Harvey, Dave Webber, National Secretary ASLEF retired Members Section, Tony West.

ROY LOST BATTLE WITH CANCER

It's with deep regret I inform you of the sad death of Roy Arrowsmith of Saltley branch. Roy finally lost the battle against cancer and died at age of 75. Always smiling Roy was a very popular person with his work colleagues, friends and family. He will be sadly missed by all.

Adrian Harnett
BS Saltley 023

JIMMY VALENTINE WAS A 'TOP MAN'

With sadness I report the death of Newton Heath driver Jimmy Valentine. Jimmy, who has died aged 87, was a 'top man' in all respects. Born and bred locally, Jimmy began at the Loco in

March 1941 until retiring at 65 at Manchester Victoria. Like many of his generation Jimmy possessed strong views and had no problem expressing them. He loved nothing better than a game of cards but as an accomplished pianist was happy to swap a cribbage board in the tap room for a keyboard in the lounge. He enjoyed good health in retirement but nursed his wife through her own poor health. Illness came quickly for Jimmy and took him from his family. He was not a man we will forget.

S Black. RMS Newton Heath.

GORDON BARBER A UNION MAN

It is with great sadness that I report the loss of my Grandfather,

Retired Parkeston Driver Gordon Barber. Gordon died peacefully on March 6th 2011 after suffering for a long time from Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Gordon was born in 1924, the son of William Barber, a driver at Ipswich, and following in his father's footsteps joined the railway as a cleaner for LNER in 1941, becoming a fireman in '46 and acting driver in '55.

Gordon became an acting fireman in 1946 and acting driver in 1955. In 1958 he moved to Parkeston and gained promotion to Driver.

Gordon drove the Hook Continental and the Scandinavian during the last days of steam.

A popular man with his many colleagues at Parkeston and Ipswich Depots Gordon was a union man through and through,



Gordon Barber, the railway ran through Gordon's veins

on the L.D.C. at Parkeston,

Gordon retired in 1987 and enjoyed retired life. He leaves behind wife Pat, son Gary, daughter Julie, grandchildren Lee, Jess, and James and great grandchildren William, Grace, and Ruby.

He will be sadly missed but will live on in my heart, and the hearts of many other people.

Lee Barber Freightliner Ipswich manager

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To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7324 2400 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk

WANTED:- AN ORIGINAL 'VINYL' COPY OF 'GREEN ALL THE WAY' BY DAVE GOULDER. I am able to copy the tracks & return the record or am willing to purchase at a reasonable price. Please telephone Reg on 07702396921.



ONE CARDIFF BRANCH BADGE, which are individually numbered priced at £3 each, One ASLEF tie pin, priced at £2 each One ASLEF tie clip/slide priced at £3 each The price o P&P is £2 per order upto 5 items. My contact details are, Edwin Cox, 2 Skenfrith Mews, Celtic Horizons, Newport, NP10 8HF, 07811761656.

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ASLEF TRAIN DRIVER collects ASLEF/railway badges, signs, shed plates, signalling items, etc. Phone Mark on 01562 746537 or (mobile) 07789301551



FIRST EDITION of the only recognised Tram/Light Rail ASLEF Branch. CROYDON TRAM/LIGHT RAIL No1 (270) Badge cost £5 each with £1 P&P. Cheques payable to: "CTRLNo1" and sent to David Brinkworth, 6 Peregrine Court, 47 Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HL or via Paypal david@brinkworth.me.uk



FAVERSHAM BRANCH (077) has finally launched its 25th Anniversary ASLEF/NUM badge. They cost £10 each including P&P. A few Faversham Branch Centenary badges remain available at £5 each including P&P. To order please contact the Branch Secretary, Steve Gurdler, 18 Hunters Way West, Chatham, Kent ME5 7HL. steve.gurdler@aslefonline.co.uk or 07941 110473



FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES and FOOTBALL BADGES bought by collector. Please call or email with any pre-1965 programmes or other early football memorabilia. Martin Scott 07718 131622 Email: scottfootball@hotmail.com



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NXEA 2009 STRIKE BADGE commemorating solidarity of ASLEF members. Purchase (£3 plus p&p) from NXEA Branch Secretary or District Council 5 Secretary. Contact M Steele on 07788 153954, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 75-77 St John Street London, EC1M 4NN** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER feature**. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

Thanks for support

CAN I thank all members and branches who gave their support in my re-election as District Organiser for District 2. It has been an honour to represent our district for the last 10 years. I look forward to repaying the faith the members have placed in me by returning me unopposed over the next 5 years.

Kevin Lindsay, District Organiser, District 2, Edinburgh No.2

Responsible trade unionism

THE Conference Targets made good reading except my jaw dropped when I read that London Underground are going to press for quadruple time and a day off in lieu for working Boxing Day. This seems avaricious. Our agreements are for double time and lieu day for Christmas and Boxing Day working. I reflected on what female drivers and wives of male drivers would feel if baby was coming and they arrived at maternity on Boxing Day to find the nurses demanding the same remuneration. I realise why I'm not suitable for important office in ASLEF but I question whether this is morally responsible trade unionism.

R W McMillan, Wolverhampton Branch

Steaming down under

I HAVE just received the July edition of the Journal here down under.

Starting to read I was pleased to read of another successful AAD along with the piece from our President. Then of course it is always sad to read of the loss of my former Kings Cross workmates, even worse when reading the letters page we see that there is a move to INCREASE the working age in the industry past 65 while it should lower.

Many of my former workmates had no alternative but to work up to they were 65 as there was no railway pension scheme to allow anything different. Many of these fought for the conditions you enjoy today including a shorter working week, longer holidays and higher wages. Now some seem to want to reverse this!

Might I suggest if you want to work past 65 you do the same as I do. I volunteer 6-7 days a

JIM TEAGUE - A WONDERFUL PAINTER OF RAILWAY SCENES

IT WAS with great pleasure that I read the feature on driver Jim Teague of Shrewsbury, a wonderful painter of railway scenes. I'm retired now but was an ASLEF man for 40 years.

I finished my service at Skipton depot, but had worked at Sutton Oak, Saltley, Camden, Speke and Ilkley. I was a volunteer steam driver at Skipton and Jim Teague fired for me many times. One day Jim fired for me on 777 Sir Lamiel, a Southern loco. We left Carlisle with an 'enthusiasts special' and lost time because she wouldn't steam, then while climbing to Aisgill Summit one injector failed before large sparks from the fire nearly set light to the footplate inspector! I later found out that the job was stopped because the railway bank



A painting by Jim Teague

behind us was ablaze! Jim very kindly gave me a painting of this locomotive.

It still hangs in my living room. A positive reminder of that dreadful day.

John Anthony, St Helens, Merseyside

week, most days still on steam locomotives at various preservation sites. I retired at 62 and at 72 I still retain a cat 1 medical and besides driving both steam and diesel locomotives keep my hand in on the shovel.

David Rollins (ex Top Shed) Brisbane, Australia

Thanks from Bishops Stortford

I WOULD like to thank my friends & colleagues at Bishops Stortford depot for the generous presentation made to me by the General Secretary marking my (early) retirement.

I have had the honour to work with many fine people in the last 26 years, mostly as an ASLEF member. I would like to wish all my NXEA colleagues good luck for the future, especially with the upcoming franchise upheavals. I also have fond memories of my days at Stonebridge Park and say hello to anybody who was there between 1989 & 1994, particularly the Birkenhead boys. You

know who you are!

John Allen, Retired Members Section

A moving farewell

I WRITE this letter with a heavy heart to thank my fellow workmates in all the various grades that have made the industry I know and love a treasured and privileged place of work. It has been a pleasure to serve alongside you all.

My career began in the mid-70s as a junior railman and then a mixed traffic guard at Holyhead. The arrival of the 'trainman' concept in 1988 allowed me to realise my ambition of becoming a driver.

There then followed a rewarding two decades of a wide variety of traction duties, during which I formed many strong bonds of trust and friendship.

Unfortunately during my tenure I was involved in four fatalities. The most recent occurred in 2003 and involved a local lad with whom I was acquainted. Despite the shock and sadness of that period, life again settled down to a reassuring routine of familiarity.

Then, in April 2010, for no apparent reason, I began to suffer panic attacks, trauma and nightmares, followed by a strong urge to vomit or defecate prior to commencement of my diagram or subsequently during the journey.

I attempted to conceal this bewildering condition from my fellow traincrew but was forced to inform my employers and consult my GP in July. He diagnosed Delayed Onset Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a condition I was not aware even existed.

I am now under the care of the Occupational Health branch of my local health board with the support of my Driver Manager and very valuable assistance of my local and district ASLEF reps. However unfortunately during this period my condition has deteriorated and I was advised to leave the industry owing to the severity of my condition.

My career is at an end.

I'd like to convey my sincere thanks to my fellow trade unionists for their kindness, and specifically to mention Colin Smith and Richie Cash for their valued assistance, advice and guidance during this difficult time.

We belong to a proud and special trade union led by very experienced people. Thanks to you all.

Richard and Menna Hughes-Jones,
Merseyside

A wheelie big thank you

I WOULD like to thank all of you who generously sponsored me to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats in March, in memory of my daughter who passed away last year. Your kindness has helped me raise £5,053 for Woodside Animal Welfare Trust in Plymouth. This organisation selected as Shanice loved animals and once told me she would love to be a vet, so it seemed a fitting way to commemorate her short life.

Your generosity and words of support have made a tremendous difference to Woodside, helping them treat sick, injured, abused and unwanted pets and wild animals. You've also helped me keep those pedals turning and to see me through each day of the last year.

Thank you also to Steve, Branch Secretary at Parkeston, for receiving the cheques and sending out the many "Thank you's" to the branches up and down the country.

ASLEF - what a great thing...Made up of some truly remarkable people.

Best wishes to you all

Dennis Barnes, Driver, DB Schenker,
Ipswich

A great union

TO everyone concerned. I must say I am very touched by the kindness and generosity you have all shown to me. I can't believe it and neither can my family. In February 2010 I

More services should mean more drivers

THIS Trade Union has always been at the forefront of negotiations regarding unsocial hours working for the betterment of the working class. Recent times have seen the struggle of incorporating Sundays in the working week. This has resulted in sympathetic clauses, having been fought for existing members being enshrined in our 'terms and conditions'. Examples would include a maximum worked in a year and non Sunday working drivers being exempt. As a direct consequence the additional benefit of creating more Train Drivers in the industry was also achieved.

As companies now look to increase their Sunday services in the wake of either political pressure or profit driven greed we should not forget the previously mentioned achievements. More services should equate to more qualified drivers in the grade – not an increase in productivity or a reliance on the employers whip of overtime.

Wayne Larman, Watford Junction

became ill and since then have had several major operations, on my colon and kidneys, which have prevented me from working.

When the money stopped and I didn't know where to turn, a cheque arrived from the hardship fund, further cheques turned up, the result of collections from various union branches, including my own, Sheffield Midland. My prayers were answered. The bills got paid and I stayed out of the brown stuff!

I'm waiting to return to hospital for another major op sometime in July or August. If all goes ok it will then be a big step to return to work.

I have worked in other industries, and belonged to other unions, but have never experienced more compassion, friendship and unity than I have among members of this union.

To all members and friends in all branches throughout the union I wish I could thank you all in person for all the help and best wishes you have sent to me. Without your help I don't know what I would have done. Please accept a sincere thank you from me and my family for all the kindness you've shown me. A special thank you to Keith Norman and all the staff for all the organizing and time you have spent in helping me. You have a great union.

Mr M Lunn, Sheffield Midland

Don't stay on! says retired member

I AM writing regarding the letter in the June edition where a member says ASLEF should support drivers who want to stay on after age 65.

I believe that if drivers who quality for the final salary pension when reaching 65 carry on working, it will slow down promotion and job creation to driving grades.

I believe ASLEF should not encourage members to work on after 65, except for those who have not made the required contributions to the pension scheme.

ASLEF must safeguard the right to retire at 65 or before. Flexible retirements may

give the government and railway company a chance to attack the final salary pension scheme with the excuse that many train drivers are staying on after 65 – and cut back their responsibilities to the pension scheme for ASLEF members
P. Begley, Retired member, Bedford

Retire before it's too late!

IN reply to John Taylor's letter regarding continuing to work after retirement age of 65 in the July Journal, I for one am of the opposite opinion. In my view, and judging by Mess Room talk I am not alone, this new law is ridiculous. When all we hear is that unemployment is at its highest to say that everyone can work on after 65 is not right. If when we retire our positions are filled by persons who are nearly 65 or over we might as well give up,

John mentioned that it would be okay as long as medicals are passed. Is our medical actually that thorough? As we get older our reactions are bound to deteriorate. From the safety aspect of it we are talking about driving trains - a lot of the times at high speed with the safety of the public in our hands, not working in an office environment.

Can you visualise airline pilots working on into old age, I think not. To those working on beyond 65 I expect it will only be a matter of time before they disagree with reasons for termination of employment and seek large payouts via tribunals.

To end I would like to say that at a time when we are all supposed to be living longer, this is unfortunately not the case for all. You only have to look at the obituary column in the journal to see that every month. We have all attended many funerals of colleagues and friends who would have loved to have lived to enjoy retirement. Remember the old saying "you are a long time dead". Forget the money and enjoy your retirement while you have the chance-you never know how long you have got left-and give the young the same employment opportunities we had.

Driver Ian Strath, Guildford Depot

The future's on display at London's Transport Museum!

Museums are full of old stuff in glass cases. Yes? No, wrong! A new exhibition at London's Transport Museum (LTM) shows how the mould has been well and truly broken. It's about the future of transport, not the past, and there's hardly a traditional exhibit in the place. Instead you'll find images, videos, film... and most of all, ideas. Chris Proctor reports ...

THE new exhibition at the LTM is called 'Sense and the City: smart, connected and on the move'. It offers a series of ideas about how transport may develop – but it begins with how people in the past visualised transport would be today.

The sources for these ideas range from comics like Dan Dare, magazines like 'Popular Science' and films like Woody Allen's 'Sleeper'. And while some of them look bizarre today (like flying cars and the notion of 'helicopters for everybody'), others are practically prototypes.

In the middle of the first gallery stands the ill-fated but remarkable-looking Clive Sinclair's C5. Such a failure, you think – until you notice that it bears an uncanny resemblance to the low-level bicycles that you often see on the road today.

RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Along the walls of this gallery are examples of all manner of 'ancient' technology – like the first mobile phones and transistor radios, objects many visitors to the museum will have used. It is quite alarming to realise how quickly we adapt to new tools and forget what we used before. Who can remember a world without an iPhone?

Against this backdrop we are invited to consider how all this instant communication will affect transport. Will people still have the same need to travel when meetings and conversations can be held simply in a virtual world? Or will it mean that the passengers will be on the move for different reasons, perhaps more social than commercial?

IN CONTACT BELOW GROUND

The next room examines the type of city that will want transport in the future. By way of introduction we're told that 14 new words enter the English language every day – such as avatar, GPS, Geotag, hashtag, mashup, wiki, smartphone and viral. How will the people who consider these words old-fashioned travel around London?

Tube travel could become very different. One concept sees CCTV replaced by

technology that will enable passengers able to see what is happening above ground: and pedestrians to see inside the tube. This will allow passengers to make decisions like whether to get off at the next stop – or are the streets too busy? And people thinking of getting onto a tube will be able to look inside carriages before they descend. There could also be information 'walls' where it would be simple to have instant contact with people outside the tube system – so you can ask someone on the surface if the 24 bus is running smoothly, so that maybe you will want to go on another few stops and catch a 27.

The bodies of buses could have screens with information about their routes as well as their destinations, and perhaps about the surrounding areas. Information gleaned from your Oyster card (so recently a futuristic concept itself) will allow you to look back in detail at journeys you have made, and even places of interest you passed even if you did not visit. And there will certainly be changes to the motor car – a 100-year old technology that is well past its sell-by date.

CARLESS AND CAREFREE

Cars, it is argued, used to be convenience items, and then became luxury goods. But this may be the beginning of its end. What will replace it? Why, the Urban Flower of course! The idea is that no one will want to own a car. Instead they will call up a driverless electronic vehicle to pick them up and take them where they want to go.

It all adds up to a fascinating view of how transport might evolve in the coming decades. Like so much in this extraordinary building, the exhibition is well worth a visit.

○ TfL staff, TfL nominees and children under 16 are admitted free to the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden. It is open Monday - Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 10.00 - 18.00 and Friday 11.00 - 18.00. Normal admission price is £13.50 (concessions £10) with tickets allowing unlimited admission for a year.



'Helicopters for everybody' by Frank Tinsley, *Mechanix Illustrated* issue January 1951

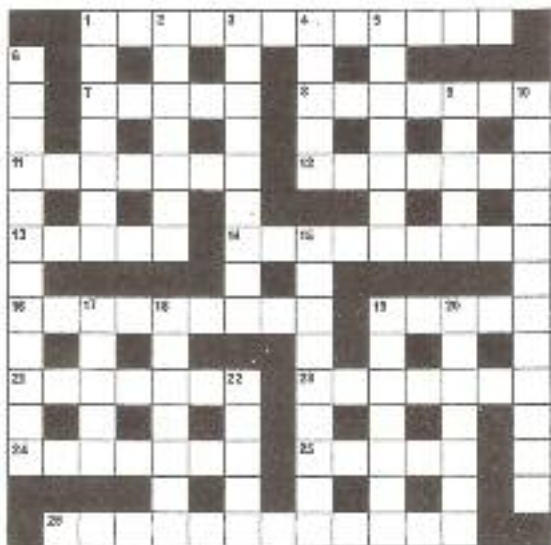


Train of Tomorrow, Barclay Shaw, 1980



Body Mortgage, Illustration by John Harris, 1988 - www.johnbharris.co.uk

Prize Crossword No. 64 set by TLC



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Take care (4,3,3,2)
 7 Scottish skill, tossing the ---- (5)
 8 Pathway beside a river (3-4)
 11 Incursion (7)
 12 Moved with impatient haste (7)
 13 Capsize (6)
 14 Deferential courtesy (9)
 16 High explosive (9)
 19 Cubed (5)
 21 Blind (7)
 23 Diabetics lifeline (7)
 24 Swindled (7)

- 25 Cautionary colour (5)
 26 Major element of a romantic novel (4,8)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Gruesome (7)
 2 Short of cash, colloquially (2,5)
 3 Severe blow (4,5)
 4 On guard for a time (5)
 5 Christian soldiers went that way (7)
 6 Safety limit (7,5)
 9 Foreigner (5)
 10 Concealed hazard (6,6)
 15 Disentangle (9)

- 17 Give way (5)
 18 Sleep in (7)
 19 Cripple (7)
 20 Guilty person (7)
 22 Wheel-less vehicle (5)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Solution to Crossword No 63 which appeared in the July 2011 edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Phil Smith** from **St. Neots**

ACROSS 1. Effervescent 7 Gouda 8 Ribbons 11 Bigotry 12 Harelip 13 Alder 14 Adulterer 16 Disagreed 19 Sight 21 O Levels 23 Rampart 24 Narrate 25 Idris 26 Anaesthetics **DOWN** 1 Engaged 2 Fluster 3 Ready made 4 Earth 5 Cabaret 6 Darby and Joan 9 Oiler 10 Superstition 15 Underline 17 Spear 18 Grenade 19 Samurai 20. Glasses 22 Sheet

Name.....
 Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 63rd ASLEF crossword in the July edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 75-77 St John Street, London EC1M 4NN by the 14th of the issue month.

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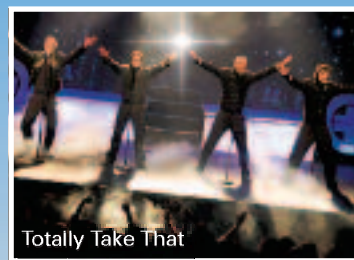
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